



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Cohen

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: June 22, 2026

Approved

Date: 6/22/2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cohen".

SUBJECT: Proposed Ballot Measure for the November 3, 2026, Election to Amend the City Charter to Allow the City Council the Option to Utilize Ranked Choice Voting Only in an Election to Fill a Vacancy in the Office of the Mayor or Councilmember.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve the memo from Councilmembers Cohen, Kamei, Mulcahy, and Tordillos, changing the election date from November 2026 to 2028 Primary Election.
2. Amend the resolution drafted by the City Attorney's Office to change all references of November 3, 2026 to 2028 Primary Election.
3. Once the State Legislature sets a date for the 2028 Primary Election, return to the City Council to amend the resolution with the specific date for the 2028 Primary Election.

BACKGROUND:

Given the City's ongoing budget challenges and the need to preserve financial flexibility, proceeding in 2026 would require committing significant General Fund resources that could otherwise remain available for essential City services and fiscal reserves. Delaying consideration

of the measure until 2028 would allow the city to continue evaluating the merits of ranked choice voting while avoiding unnecessary election costs.

We have recently received the cost estimate from the Registrar of Voters of holding a ballot measure election in a nonmayoral year and it is much more expensive than holding an election in a mayoral year. The cost estimate is \$2.7 million for 2026 whereas the cost would be under \$700k in March 2028. If we delay placing this on the ballot, the \$2.3 million set aside for election costs in the FY 2026-27 budget would return to the general fund reserve.

In addition, the outcome of the June 2026 primary decreased the likelihood of a special election in 2027, minimizing any practical disadvantages associated with waiting until 2028. Therefore, waiting until 2028 should have no negative impacts. As a result, postponing the measure provides a fiscally responsible path forward that balances interest in electoral reform with the City's current budgetary constraints.